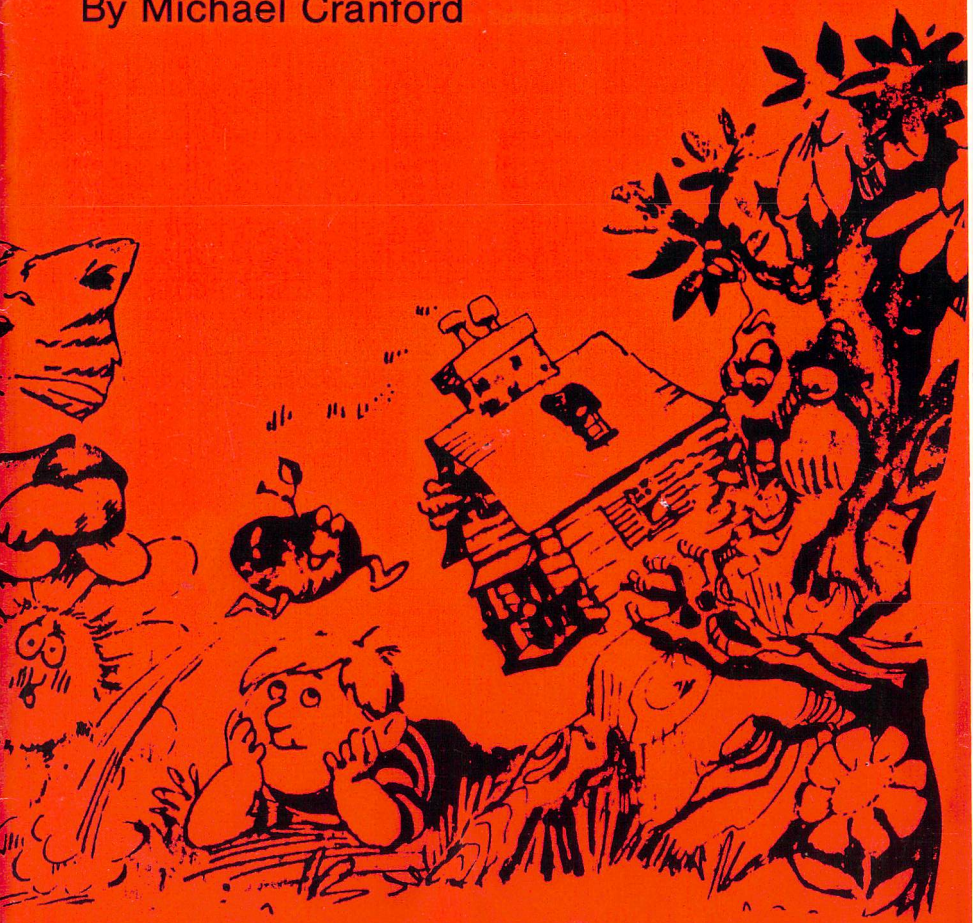
HesWare™

STORY MACHINE

By Michael Cranford



Fast Start Instructions

Push the cartridge into the back of your computer. Turn on the computer. The program will appear automatically on the screen. Press any key to begin. You can now begin to type your story. On the bottom of the screen are listed three choices for you to make while you type your story. However, you may only choose any of them after you have typed in a period at the end of a sentence and before you start a new sentence.

If you PRESS 1, you must pick one of two new choices: By PRESSING 1, you can either replay your story from start to finish, or by PRESSING 2, you can restart your story from the beginning. If you choose to replay your story, it will be reprinted from the start, just as you typed it, including all the action. If you choose to restart your story, everything will be cleared from the screen and you can start again.

PRESS 2 to check the Dictionary. This will appear at the top of the screen, where your actors normally reside. The Dictionary contains all of the words you can use in your story. Because there are three pages of words, you must press any key to go on. After you have looked at all of the words, you will automatically go on to Choice 3, listed below.

PRESS 3 if you need HELP. Here, as in Choice 1, you can either replay or restart your story. Also you can save your present story or load an earlier story into the computer. For this, you need a tape machine or a disk drive. The computer will ask you which you have. Type in the name under which you saved the story, or the name of the story under which you wish to save it. If you save a story with the same name as an earlier story, this will replace the older name.

Rules for Writing Stories

1. Begin each sentence with an article, pronoun, or adjective (A, HE, THIS, etc.)

2. Use present tense verbs (RUN, not RAN).

3. A period or prepositional phrase must follow a verb (RUN TO A HOUSE).

4. Pronouns can be used for the last noun specified in a sentence.

5. Always end your sentences with a period. You will see your sentence acted out when you type the period.

6. Think of your story as a script for the computer to act out. A maximum of four actors can appear in the story at any one time. If your story calls for more than four actors to be on the screen at one time, the message "TOO MANY ACTORS" will appear.

7. Keep typing as you get near the end of a line. The whole word will appear on the next line.

8. You will be able to see four lines of your story as you type it. If you get to the bottom while typing, the lines will be moved up on the screen for you.

THE STORY MACHINE DICTIONARY

Articles

A
An
The

Adjectives

Some
This
These
Red
Green
Blue
Yellow
Purple
Black

Pronouns

He
She
It
They

Nouns

Apple(s)
Box(es)
Boy(s)
Bumpus(es)
Cat(s)
Dog(s)
Fence(s)
Flower(s)
Girl(s)
Rock(s)
Store(s)
Tree(s)
House(s)

Possessive Pronouns

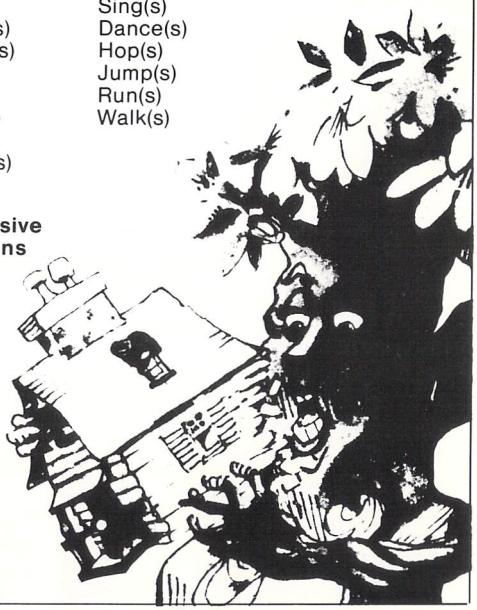
His
Her
Its
Their

Verbs

Eat(s)
Zot(s)
Is
Are
Go(es)
Sing(s)
Dance(s)
Hop(s)
Jump(s)
Run(s)
Walk(s)

Prepositions

Near
To
For



Age or Skills Needed

Any child five years old or older will enjoy this program. Children who can only read 10 of the words used by the program will quickly learn the others.

A Note to Parents

STORY MACHINE encourages young readers to become young writers. Using a vocabulary of about 50 words, children can write sentences, combine them into stories, and see their stories animated.

While children giggle over their stories, they will be learning the following things:

Sight Vocabulary. A sight vocabulary is the set of words a child knows on sight, without sounding them out. Children who don't already read the words used in the program will quickly learn them so that they can use them in their stories.

Awareness of Grammar. Children will become more aware that there are rules for language use as they use this program. For example, the program will not accept a singular subject and a plural verb.

Positive Attitude Toward Writing. The motivation to write will be high when the reward is animation. This activity tells them that writing can be fun.

Writing Longer Stories. Five, six, and seven-year old writers often write stories comprised of one or two sentences. The physical act of writing is demanding for young children. Playing with the computer keyboard is viewed as fun, whereas writing with pencil and paper is often viewed as work. Children will often write longer stories on a keyboard than they will with a pencil.

Keyboard Familiarity. Children use the keyboard to communicate with the computer instead of joysticks or game paddles. Keyboard familiarity is an important aspect of computer literacy that children begin learning with this program.

Dictionary

The first time you play, you'll probably want to check the Dictionary. You will see a list of about 50 words you can use in your story. If you use any other words, or misspell words, or use words incorrectly in your story, the computer will cross them out. On the list, nouns and verbs are printed in their singluar forms.

Writing Your Story

The screen has two parts. The top area is where the actors appear and the story is acted out. The bottom area is where the words appear as you write your story.

There are a few rules you'll need to follow in writing your story.

If a sentence is not grammatically correct, or a word is misspelled, the computer will erase the mistake for you. When you get near the end of a line, keep typing and the next word will appear whole on the next line.

For practice, let's write a story. Type:

THE BOY RUNS TO A BLUE APPLE.

When you type the period (.) you will see the boy run. Now type:

HE EATS THE BLUE APPLE. THE GIRL HOPS TO THE GREEN HOUSE.

If you want to see the story again, PRESS 1 and follow the instructions.

There are a few types of sentences that cannot be animated even though they are correct both in grammar and spelling.

- Verbs cannot take direct objects, except for "eat" and "zot". A period or prepositional phrase must follow a verb. For example, the computer can animate:

  THE BOY HOPS.

  THE YELLOW BUMPUSES HOP TO THE FLOWERS.

- The computer cannot animate:

  THE BOY JUMPS THE ROCK.

  The computer cannot animate sentences with an inverted sentence order. For example, it is O.K. to write:

  THE BOY JUMPS TO THE RED HOUSE.

- It is not O.K. to write:

  TO THE RED HOUSE THE BOY JUMPS.

- Another limitation concerns the verb "eat". To "eat" something, an actor must be above or below the object which is to be eaten.
  For example, type:

  THE BOY IS NEAR THE FLOWER.
  THE GIRL IS NEAR THE BOY.
  THE GIRL EATS THE FLOWER.

  You should have gotten a message telling you that the girl is "NOT CLOSE ENOUGH." The computer also erased the last word. Now type:

  THE BOY EATS THE FLOWER.

  And the flower is eaten!

- If your child asks why the computer has these limitations, explain that computers aren't as smart as they sometimes seem!

Saving a Story

When you have written a story you want to save, PRESS 3 to see a list of choices. The third choice, SAVE YOUR STORY, will allow you to store your story on a disk or on tape. The computer will ask you to PRESS 1 for disk, or PRESS 2 for tape. You must have either a disk drive or a tape unit to save your story.

To save a story, you must have a tape or disk that has been formatted to hold the data, as described in the appropriate operation manual. A single disk or tape can hold many stories.

If the light on the disk drive is blinking after you have tried to save your story, you've made a mistake. Check to make sure you have the disk face up, and that the write-protect notch is not covered up. Make sure the disk drive door is closed. You should now be able to save your story.

Retrieving a Story

After you've saved your stories, you can replay one or more of them. PRESS 3 to see a list of choices. The fourth choice, LOAD A STORY, will retrieve any story you have put on a disk or tape. PRESS 1 or 2 when the computer asks if you saved your story on disk or tape. Type the name under which you saved the story. When it has been loaded in, PRESS 1 to play it again.

If the light on the disk drive is blinking after you have tried to load a story, you've made a mistake. Check that you have the correct disk in the drive and that you have typed the correct name of the story you wish to load. Make sure the disk drive door is closed. You should now be able to load your story.

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